Improve(ing) Teaching by the Knowledge of Discourse in English Schools

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ABSTRACT

Most language learners have spent a long period of time in English classes for learning, but just few learners obtained their aims. Among the most remarkable schools, functionalists have claimed that all simple words, phrases, sentences and conversations have been reacted to context. This paper has been described the nature of discourse and concluded some problems between instructors and learners that make unwilling learners and finally, it has been suggested some tips to immature instructors to how persuade learners and prevent to abandon their class.

Key words: discourse, English class, context, functionalism school and teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English language in the current days is not hidden to anyone, one of the routine question among learners "is where should I register to learn well, quick and fruitful?" but, really where, who can satisfy them? This paper has been shown some different factors that switch willing learners to unwilling. It has been endeavored to clarify the brief explanation about discourse and close relationship between knowledge of discourse and applied in the instructors' teaching. During the long period of time, linguistics try to help human to know language, that is one of the God's gifts vs. other creatures. Two most remarkable schools in linguistics are structuralism and functionalism, structuralisms have been claimed that language is made according to some specific rules and they analyze small unit of language to big parts, they believe that small units of language by using some rules make long chains of that language units. On the other hand, functionalisms believe that language is made just for communication. Therefore, structuralism claims that human beings use small parts and make the language chains in their conversations; in contrast functionalisms claim that context has been affected in human discourse.

In the mid of 1960s, linguistic science witnessed the birth of new "interdisciplinaries" like semiotics, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic as well as analyze the discourse. Some linguists realized that the use of language obviously was not reduced to the structures of isolated, abstract, invented sentences as was the case in structural and generative grammars, but needed analyses of structures "beyond the sentence" and of whole "texts", for instance to account for

"anaphora" and "coherence". Some pioneers in discourses are Michel Foucault (1961), Wolf gang Dressler (1972), and Teun A. van Dijk (1972, 1979), in Europe, and Joseph Grimes (1975), Tom Givón (1979). Early studies in Functional Systemic Grammar, founded by Michael Halliday in the UK (and then Australia), he paid much attention to discourse, for instance in the account of "cohesion" the grammatical expression of semantic coherence (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Chun-Chun Yeh (2004) examined the relationship between cohesion and coherence in contrastive analysis of English and Chinese. According to him Chinese is a pragmatically-oriented language and English is a grammatically-oriented language. He concluded from Chinese text: first, there are different cohesive ties for different languages and second, coherence is universal and needs existing knowledge and illocutionary meanings. Knowing about cohesive ties which are surface of the text help an inexperienced reader to understand the writer`s intentions. Glenn Fulcher (1989) stated that cohesive ties are the basis for coherent text. He considered cohesion and coherence in theory and reading research and stated that coherence is a top-down or concept-driven theories of reading. For schema theory coherence comes first, cohesion is linguistic. He set a reading comprehension passage for Greek and Armenian- speaking students in the 5th and 6th classes of high school. The original text was given to control group with 9 students and the altered text was given to experimental group with 7 students. These are the tasks which were asked to do:

a) If they have problems in understanding the text after first reading.
b) Make a list of characters
c) Discuss with the teacher about the roles of characters
d) Without looking at the reading, write a summary of the reading text.

There was no statistical evidence so it was evaluated subjectively by the teacher. The results showed that the text was difficult for control group and only one student in experimental group reported that the text was difficult. In the list of characters they made, there was no difference between two groups. About discussing the roles of characters there was a difference between groups, because the text was difficult for control group they do not understand the text and could not discuss about the roles. So the conclusion was that the experimental group remembered the events and details accurately because of activation of their schematic understanding of the text, so they had a picture of the text. Dr. Alia Bader and Dr. Sahera Abdel-Karim (2010) in their article about pragmatic concept in discourse analysis aimed to explain these notions: context of situation, co-text, cohesion, coherence, text, presupposition, inference.

1.2. Context of Situation
According to Hymes (1964), the context of situation both defines the range of possible interpretation and supports the intended interpretation: "The use of linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context, it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those the forms can signal; the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to that form other than those the context can support".

1.3. Co-Text
In the Study of Language, Yule (2006) remarks that: "The co-text of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence. The surrounding co-text has a strong effect on what we think the word probably means".

1.4. Text
According to Halliday and Hassan`s view (1976) a text is considered as a unit of meaning not form. It is realized by sentences. However, it does not contain sentences.

1.5. Cohesion
The connections and ties which exist within the text.

1.6. Coherence
By cohesion alone the linguistic messages could not understand, even the text was formed well or not we tried to understand it rather to reject it as a bad text. So coherence is important too and it is in the mind of the listener.

1.7. Inference
Inference derives from background knowledge of the addressee and by this prior knowledge s/he interprets the utterances.

1.8. Presupposition
It is the assumption that a listener or hearer knows. Even the negative version of the sentence does not change the assumption, if it was right. Wendy Baker and Rachel Hansen Bricker (2010), investigated the effects of direct and indirect speech acts on native English and ESL speakers` perception of teacher written feedback. The students from university were 35 males and 36 females in both native English (30) and second language learners (41) with the ages from 18 to 38. Native speakers were from the United States and second language learners were from Romance (17), Eastern European (8) and Asian (13). The native languages of the other three participants were German, Arabic and Mongolian. The amounts of English experience of ESL participants were 5 to 10 years. Two sample essays were used in this study: a personal narrative and a scientific proposal. After each section of the essay there was teacher feedback which consisted of comments. For each essay there were six comments that were direct, indirect or hedges. These texts were distributed randomly to participants. The comments were three positive or praise and three negative or criticism which required participants to make a correction to the text. The students do these tests by using a computer. After completing the essays they were asked a question about their demographic information. The main purpose of the study was to decide whether directness type of teacher feedback affected how quickly and accurately the students were able to distinguish the intention of feedback and correct it if necessary.

They wanted to examine two types of questions. For the first question, they wanted to know how directness affected participants` speed and accuracy in distinguishing the positive (praise) and negative (requested corrections) comments of the teacher. And for the second question how directness affected speed and accuracy of the students in making requested corrections. For these questions they examined the response times and accuracy of the participants for the positive and negative comments. To examine these, an ANOVA was used. For first question they found that both native English and ESL learners identified positive comments more quickly and accurately than negative comments according to the directness type of teacher comments. They found that students are slowest and least accurate in indirect speech acts. In contrast to indirect speech acts they are faster and more accurate in direct speech acts both positively and negatively. The finding for question 2 was that students were fastest but least accurate at making corrections in indirect speech acts and they were slowest and most accurate in direct speech acts.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to describe the nature of discourse and demonstrate the problems between instructors and learners. It has suggested some tips to immature instructors to persuade learners and prevent to make them unwilling learners.

3. CONCLUSION

As regards, the paper has mentioned in the title of this paper, the writer has been found out the relationship between knowing discourse and fruitfulness methods in his or her classes to persuade learners in learning. Husseini (2012) in his thesis classified discourse and mentioned all oral and written languages are affected beyond the situation, social, sex, culture, nature and nurture. He also mentioned some new discourse like, sexuality discourse, functional discourse and so on. Before, some protagonists like fairclough,Vandyk, Bloomer had mentioned political discourse and law discourse. Therefore, a good instructor should perceive everything in his or her classes. The main purpose in English classes is the improvement of language abilities. Unfortunately, in most classes, instructors never consider the learners. Which factors make willing learners to unwilling? Most instructors just show off themselves in the class. They do not let learners speak, therefore learners just listen or sometimes, they think about something else. In short, the knowledge of discourse has been opened a different attitude to instructors, like, removing the learners fear, having confidence in class, distinction idiosyncrasy, regarding age, sex, social class, native language, class level, aim of the class and so on.

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